

with the merest fair play it would have done. We look upon the present arrangement as a national misfortune and a national disgrace. It should be the object of all who are interested in British art to obtain an immediate alteration of it.

THE GEOMETRICAL MOSAIC OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

Our readers will remember that, last season, Mr. M. D. Wyatt shewed, by papers read at the Institute of Architects and elsewhere, and the exhibition of his drawings, that he had paid particular attention during his travels to mosaic decorations. Classic ground having been for the most part well trodden and noted by the general observer, the time has come when those who would advance inquiry must take up some speciality and work it out thoroughly. The division of labour in the investigation of the arts of a country is as important as as productive of good result as in manufactures. "Divide and conquer" is a useful maxim, and has been kept in view by some of our later writers and investigators.

Mr. Wyatt, then, took for his speciality geometrical mosaic decorations, drew all he could find, and has produced a book of great beauty, and which will be found very useful, not merely in aiding to revive this art and improve our pavements, but to ornamentalists generally, and to all to whom nice combinations either of lines or colours are valuable.* It consists of 21 plates, of large folio size, each containing a number of examples, coloured and gilt as the originals, preceded by a brief historical notice of the art. The latter shews a very considerable extent of attainments on the part of the author, and is clearly and nicely written. As, however, our readers already have before them a general outline of it from the pen of Mr. Wyatt himself, we need do little more than refer to it.

The writer justly remarks that,—"In examining the nature of the subjects selected for representation in pictorial or imitative mosaic, the student cannot but be struck by the wide range embraced, and the evidence of intellect or of popular education—sometimes both—manifested in the selection or appropriation of the various themes. Gods, centaurs, men, animals, landscapes, flowers, ornaments, foliage, are depicted with almost equal ability; and we must remember that it is to the durability of the materials of which these almost imperishable relics are composed, we are indebted for the preservation of many of the lovely fancies of the great artists of antiquity, whose creations might otherwise have altogether passed away. Bearing in mind, too, the constant practice of reproduction and repetition prevalent among artists and artisans of old, we must not refuse to ascribe the invention, composition, and artistic treatment of any popular legend to a master mind, merely because we meet with its representation in fragments of coarse and perhaps ill-drawn mosaic, or in a mural painting indifferently executed."

Great skill was shewn as well in the choice of subjects to suit the character of the apartment wherein the mosaic was placed, as in the adaptation of the lines to produce the best effect under varying circumstances:—"Turning our attention to the structure and condition of ancient conventional or purely architectural design, as applied to mosaic work, and examining the relations subsisting between its lines and colours and those of the adjacent architectural members, we cannot but observe the skill with which they have been both arranged and contrasted. Thus the minute and frequently recurring patterns met with at Pompeii, in the cubicula, and in the smaller chambers, were adapted to give scale to the rooms; and, from their strictly regular and geometrical character, to cause the eye to dwell with increased pleasure on the flowing and playful forms of the paintings executed upon the walls; in much the same way the rectilinear lines of the pavement of the Pantheon enhance the beauty of the graceful curves and its lacunarie."

Mr. Wyatt remarks that the most ancient mosaic that has been discovered displaying Christian workmanship, is probably the one found in this country at Horkstow, in Lincolnshire, where, in conjunction with the usual Roman frets and ornaments, are to be seen one of the monograms in use among the early Christians, and a repetition of the Ichthus, or fish, one of their earliest and most sacred symbols. This mosaic is supposed to be earlier than the time of Constantine the Great, and possesses the greatest interest.

"The two earliest glass mosaics of the Christian era, which either exist or of whose existence we have certain evidence," says our author, "possess an extraordinary interest in connection with the study of iconography. The most ancient—which was traditionally related to have been given to Prudentius, a Roman patrician, by St. Peter, and which is referred to by Church writers of the fourth century, was stated by M. Frelet, at the séance held in 1841 at Lyons, by the French Society "for the preservation of monuments," to be worthy of regard, as probably the primary type for the appearance of our Saviour; and he further observed, that the pious duty of imitating this mosaic, in after examples, was one of the great causes of the general resemblance of physiognomy in many of the portraits executed from that period until the ninth century."

Turning over the illustrations, plate 2 exhibits a fragment of the pavement which adorned the church of San Marco at Rome, composed solely of porphyry, serpentine, and white marble, the two former being imbedded in grooves cut in slabs of the latter.

Plate 6 gives a compartment of the well known pavement in Santa Maria Maggiore; and plate 7 that of the nave of San Lorenzo fuori le Mura. The latter is probably of the eighth century. Plates 8 and 9 give nice examples of glass tessellation from San Lorenzo, San Giovanni Laterano, &c. In plate 13 a specimen from the Saracenic palace, "La Ziza," at Palermo, shews how a white line was employed by the orientals to develop the geometrical base of the pattern, and at the same time weave the other colours round and about, as a beautiful accompaniment, harmonizing with, but not overpowering the predominant idea. Plate 15 shews two of the columns from the cloisters of San Giovanni Laterano, to give an idea of the effect produced by glass tessellation in conjunction with architectural forms. Plate 16 shews one of the marble pulpits remaining in the church of Santa Maria in Araceli, Rome.

Plates 17, 18, and 19 give exquisite specimens of glass mosaic, from the cathedral at Monreale, Palermo, and St. Mark's, Venice. And plate 20 gives selections from the beautiful illuminations of the Byzantine copy of the Acts of the Apostles, preserved in the library of the Vatican. These "serve to develop, by contrast with the preceding specimens of glass mosaic, the general coherence of design existing between the ornaments on vellum and those incrustated on the walls of the stateliest churches, and demonstrate to the fullest extent, the Greek affection for gold grounds and dazzling yet harmonious colouring."

For the manner in which this work has been produced (with colours and gilding), Messrs. Day and Son are entitled to unqualified praise.

THE REGENT-STREET COLONNADE.

The destruction is complete. One of the most striking features of modern London has been cut off its face, and a great public injury committed, to gratify a score of persons who fancy they will be individually benefitted by the removal of the colonnade. Now that the mischief is done, some of our contemporaries are raising their voices against it. The *Daily News* says, "the poor Quadrant! Has no one a kind word to say for it before it goes?"

So long as it has been with us.

Such joys as it has seen with us.

Shall we part from it without a friendly word—a sad, or at least a respectful farewell?

There are many among us old enough to remember what the space, now covered by the Quadrant, was before the Prince Regent and the Prince of Architects invaded it. The narrow

row streets, the wretched hovels, the dens of infamy (we may almost say) that stood upon its site—who did not rejoice in their destruction? There sprang up in that place the finest street in Europe, and the largest colonnade. A diversity of opinion may exist as to the merits of the work in detail, but there can be none as to its effect as a whole. The Quadrant has been one of the features of London; not a foreigner but asked for it: not a priot shop abroad but would display in its window an engraving of it, good, bad, or indifferent, under the attractive though over-comprehensive title of "La ville de Londres."

One of our national characteristics is to affect a depreciation of things in which we really feel a pride. An Englishman lionising an officer of the "Garde Nationale" would probably shrug up his shoulders as he passed the County Fire Office, whilst inwardly elated at the evident pleasure the scene before him excited, in his companion. On the whole, however, the feeling of Londoners has been by no means generally unfavourable to the Quadrant: certainly the opinion of country cousins has strongly and almost invariably supported it."

The paper we have quoted calls the matter a "job," and attributes it to the "office of Woods and Forests" in general, and their architect in particular. There is no evidence before us that this is the fact; all that we can reproach them with is weakness for listening to illogical representations.

IMPROVEMENT OF HYDE-PARK.

THE REGENT-STREET COLONNADE.

SIR,—By the destruction of the colonnade in Regent-street, a great number of columns become disposable, and I suggest that a very handsome ornament may be added to Hyde-park by the employment of some of them; and at the same time it would be an object of great convenience and utility.

Frequented as this park is in summer time by hundreds of the inhabitants of the metropolis, for air and healthful recreation, it often happens in our variable climate, a storm or heavy rain sets in suddenly in the midst of sunshine. There is no place of shelter to be found near, excepting the roadway under the large arch, or the gateway to Tattersall's stables. Hundreds of well-dressed ladies are often wetted by the pitiless shower to the risk or injury of their health, and the destruction of their habiliments.

I propose that a space be covered in an arcade, colonnades, or any other arrangement that architectural art may design to adorn the metropolis. A suitable situation exists on the lawn between the ride and the drive, near the Piccadilly gate, and the cast-off columns of the Quadrant would furnish an aid to the erection of something handsome for the above purpose at a trifling cost.

THE IDLER IN LONDON.

MODERN & ANCIENT ART.

SIR,—As a second letter, signed "Amateur," has appeared in your journal, directed against the papers of Mr. Cave Thomas on the fine arts, I feel it a duty to attempt a refutation of it (in the shape of argument, if possible); but I confess, at starting, that to do so appears a task of no small difficulty, as, to refute the letter *in toto*, would be to denounce both parties, while to disentangle each ramification of error would be a wearisome task.

In his second letter, "Amateur" starts with triumphantly drawing a comparison between the National Gallery and the exhibition of the Royal Academy adjoining. He does not, however, on this occasion, make any display of æsthetic reasoning, but is content to refer the decision to "any unprejudiced critic." I have been myself, this year, more than once to the National Gallery, to admire the "Bacchus and Ariadne" of Titian, and the "Julius II." of Raffaele, or that which is a copy of it, and so at present will not contest the point with him, but will simply remind him that, whereas the old gallery is formed of a selection from the best masters of every school ranging over a period of three centuries, the modern exhibition consists of works by artists of nearly every grade of one country, and the produce

* Specimens of the Geometrical Mosaic of the Middle Ages, by Matthew Digby Wyatt, architect, London: Published for the proprietors, at 17, Great-street, Lincoln's Inn-fields. Day and Son, lithographers to the Queen.